

Bishop R. S. Williams, D.D.

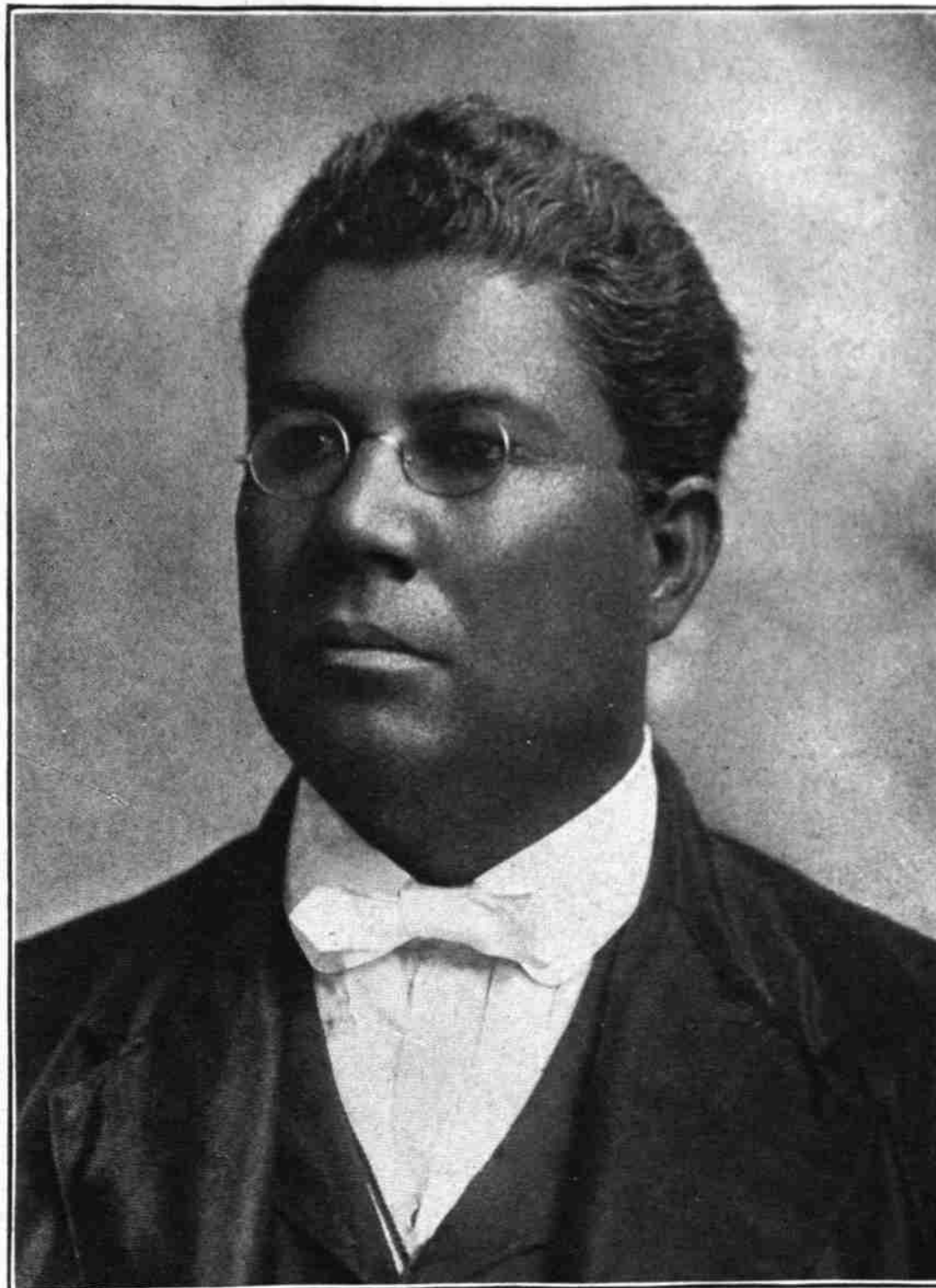
Colored M. E. Church

Residence: Augusta, Ga.

BISHOP WILLIAMS presides over the conferences of North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, North Alabama, Washington, and Philadelphia. He was born in Louisiana, October 27, 1858. His boyhood days were spent on the farm. He was educated at Wiley University, Marshall, Tex., and Howard University, Washington, D. C.

Licensed to preach in 1876, he served churches in several states until his election as bishop in 1894. He has been secretary of the College of Bishops during his entire connection with the episcopacy. He is the author of a volume of sermons and of several pamphlets on religious subjects.

Bishop Williams has been honored frequently by his church and has ably represented his people on many important occasions. He was a delegate to the Ecumenical Conferences of Methodists in 1891 at Washington and 1901 at London, and he was the promoter and leader of the twentieth century movement which raised a large thank offering for missions and education. The bishop has a wife and six children, and their home is in Augusta, Ga.



BISHOP R. S. WILLIAMS, D.D.

Greatest Needs of the Negro Race

Bishop R. S. Williams, D.D.

UNDER the dominance of the commercial spirit that would make a power-house of Niagara, turn parks into railroads, and churches into granaries, it is not strange that undue stress should be laid on industrialism as a factor in the development of the Negro race. But when "the tumult and the shouting dies," and reason and sentiment are among "the things that remain," the emphasis will be placed where Christ put it two thousand years ago when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, . . . and all these things shall be added."

With a race, as with a nation, the religious and moral ideals are the stars that light up the way of civilization. The Negro is no exception to the rule that has governed the development of all other races; his fundamental need is moral and spiritual in character.

The Negro must be taught the cardinal virtues of Christianity and the possibility of exemplifying them in his life; his already deep religious nature must be thrown under the sovereignty of the Christian ideal, so that his failings may not stand in the way of civic and industrial hope.

The greatest need for the development of the race will be met when the means for imparting this teaching are fully supplied. Give us trained and consecrated preachers, teachers, and Sunday-school workers in sufficient numbers, and it will not be long before results devoutly prayed for will be realized.

The Preachers. The center of the Negro's religious and social life is the church. His pastor is his final authority on the interpretation of God's Word, and the criterion for all social and religious conduct. How necessary, then, it is that he who undertakes this ministry "shall be the highest type of man morally, and the best qualified intellectually. The prejudices of illiterate preachers must be overcome, and their illiteracy reduced, by means of institutes and unions in charge of competent men; and the future leadership of the church must be insured by directing large numbers of promising young men to the colleges and theological schools to be trained for the Master's use.

The Teachers. The importance of a knowledge of the Scriptures should be

urged upon every school teacher, especially those who work in the rural districts. Special lectures on methods of Bible study should be delivered at all teachers' institutes, so that the teachers may be prepared to go out and give good service in needy communities. In that way the masses of youth, untouched directly by our great institutions of learning, may be taught the principles of right living.

The Sunday-School Workers. I cannot better indicate the strong need for Sunday-school workers than by quoting the following from Dr. Holland: "The humanizing culture that comes to the youth through its [Sunday-school's] pure and pleasant music; the self-respect with which it inspires the poor and degraded, whom it brings into association with the better bred; the reverence for the Sabbath which it inculcates; the vital contact into which it brings multitudes of children with the most earnest and self-sacrificing spirits in the country, and, above all, its instruction of hundreds of thousands in the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion, who, but for that instruction, would grow up in almost heathenish ignorance, — all these mark it as one of the most useful and important agencies in our hands for the redemption of our country and the world to purity and goodness."